



The Missouri National Recreational River from the Chief Standing Bear Overlook near Niobrara, Nebraska - NPS

The Wild & Scenic Middle Missouri River - 39 Mile District

The 39 Mile District of the Missouri National Recreational River encompasses the least developed stretch of the free flowing Missouri River in the United States. This driving tour starts at Chief Standing Bear Memorial Bridge close to Running Water, South Dakota and covers over 65 miles of roadway to Fort Randall Historic Site.

Know Before You Go: The driving tour will take you in, around and through the bluffs and bottomlands of one the least developed stretches of the Missouri National Recreational River. Most of the driving takes place on winding, gravel roads or two lane, paved county roads. Make sure your car is in good working condition. There are few services along these roads and only the occasional rural farmstead. Cell phone coverage is spotty at best. Be sure to prepare accordingly. A front wheel car should do fine on these roads, four wheel drive is not needed, but do not attempt to travel on these roads during or after heavy rain and snow.

This driving tour will reveal the stunning view scape of the Middle Missouri River valley. Endless vistas stretch across the horizon. Thousands of acres of grass or farm field cover the landscape. A rich, complex history of Native Americans and homesteaders is still discernible in this area. It is a land where the past is ever present.

Mile 0.0 - Chief Standing Bear Memorial Bridge Overlook. Take a left out of parking lot. Head north on South Dakota Highway 37

The Bridge is named after Ponca Indian Chief Standing Bear who won a landmark court case that brought greater civil rights for Native Americans. The case arose from the U.S. Government's decision to remove the Ponca from their traditional homeland. In 1877, the federal government decided to remove the Ponca Indians to Indian Territory (present day Oklahoma).

The Ponca were a small tribe living on the west bank of the Missouri River and along what are now the lower Niobrara River and Ponca Creek in northeast Nebraska. Standing Bear, a tribal leader, protested his tribe's eviction. Federal troops enforced the removal orders, with the result that the Poncas arrived in Indian Territory in the summer of 1878. The death of Chief Standing Bear's sixteen-year old son in late December 1878 set in motion the event which was to bring a measure of justice and worldwide fame to the chief and his small band of followers. Wanting to honor his son's last wish to be buried in the land of his birth and not in a strange country where his spirit would wander forever,

Standing Bear gathered a few members of his tribe—mostly women and children—and started for the Ponca homeland in the north. Because Indians were not allowed to leave their reservation without permission, Standing Bear and his followers were labeled a renegade band. The Army, on the order of The Secretary of the Interior, arrested them and took them to Fort Omaha, the intention being to return them to Indian Territory.

The case of *Standing Bear v. Crook* decided in 1879 is a landmark court decision that was the beginning of civil rights for Native Americans. The case was decided in favor of Standing Bear, reasoning that he and his band were indeed "persons" under the law, entitled to sever tribal connections and were free to enjoy the rights of any other person in the land. The government appealed Dundy's decision, but the Supreme Court of the United States refused to hear the case, leaving Standing Bear and his followers free in the eyes of the law.

(Visitor's note: There are multiple wayside exhibits at the overlook which tell the story of transportation along this stretch of the Missouri River as well as the Lewis and Clark Expedition's adventures in the immediate area.

Mile 4.7 - Go left onto Bon Homme County Road 20 (314th Avenue)



An old barn just off Bon Homme County Road 20

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Mile 7.8 - You will come to a junction. Take a right onto 407th Avenue

Mile 10.8 - Take a left onto Bon Homme County Road 18 (312th Avenue)

Mile 15.6 - Crosses Choteau Creek. Road changes to Charles Mix County Road 2

You are now entering the Yankton Indian Reservation. The Great Sioux Nation has seven primary divisions, based on their respective places in the “Oceti Sakowin” or Seven Council Fires. The Ihanktunwan (Yanktons) are one of the seven council fires. The Yankton settled in the eastern Dakotas. They became middlemen in a far-flung trade system between the Lakotas, further to the west and the Santees to their east. The Yankton adopted a semi-sedentary lifestyle as Plains villagers.

This lifestyle was influenced by their close proximity to the Missouri River. At the turn of the 19th century the Yankton claimed slightly more than 13 million acres with a population of approximately 2,000. At present, the tribal headquarters is located in Wagner, South Dakota. The tribe own approximately 40,000 acres. Enrolled membership currently stands at 3,500.

Mile 30.7 - Junction with BIA Road 30 (390th Avenue). Take a right.

Mile 31.0 - Take a right into roadside pullout. Walk short distance to the Yankton Sioux Treaty Monument

The Yankton Sioux Treaty Monument memorializes the 1858 treaty between the United States Government and the Yankton Sioux. By the late 1850s pressure to open up what is now southeastern South Dakota to white settlement had become very strong. Struck-by-the-Ree and several other headmen journeyed to Washington, D.C., in late 1857 to negotiate a treaty with the federal government. For more than three and a half months, they worked out the terms of a treaty of land cession. Struck-by-the-Ree's name appears first on the Treaty of Washington, signed April 19, 1858.

Returning from Washington, Padaniapapi (Struck-by-The-Ree) told his people, "The white men are coming in like maggots. It is useless to resist them. They are many more than we are. We could not hope to stop them. Many of our brave warriors would be killed, our women and children left in sorrow, and still we would not stop them. We must accept it, get the best terms we can get and try to adopt their ways."

For about eleven and a half million acres, a payment of approximately \$1.6 million in annuities was to be paid over the next 50 years. Specific provisions of the treaty called for educating the tribe to develop skills in agriculture, industrial arts and homemaking. This treaty provided for the removal of the tribe to a 475,000-acre reservation on the north side of the Missouri River in what is now Charles Mix County. (Charles E. Mix was the commissioner who signed for the federal government.) The US Senate ratified the treaty on February 16, 1859 and President Buchanan authorized it ten days later. On July 10, 1859, the Yankton Sioux vacated the ceded lands and moved onto the newly-created reservation.

Mile 31.0 - 31.3 - Go south back down BIA Road 30 and take a right back onto Charles Mix County Road 2.



Ruined building that was once part of the Rising Hail Colony

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Mile 31.3 - Community of Greenwood. Look left to see abandoned Greenwood Presbyterian Church

The first Yankton tribal headquarters was here in Greenwood, South Dakota, on the banks of the Missouri River. Life on the reservation became increasingly tied to the river. Steamboats brought goods and supplies promised by the treaty. Agency buildings and a sawmill were constructed in the town. The Yankton cultivated crops, especially corn along the rich river bottomland surrounding the area. Greenwood, like many other river towns, fell in prestige when the railroad took the place of steamboats for supply and delivery to the reservation. A scattering of historic buildings can still be found in the community today, this includes the first Presbyterian Church in the Dakotas.

Mile 31.5 - Charles Mix County Road turns to dirt

Mile 40.8 - Rising Hail Colony Ruins

In 1936 the United States Government created Rising Hail Colony as an agricultural experiment area in an effort to help the Yankton Sioux become self-sufficient. Ruined chalkstone buildings are all that is left on this formerly thriving Indian cooperative. About 50 people from multiple families worked together to construct houses, a community hall, barn and post office among other buildings. A schoolhouse held the Rising Hail Cooperative Office.

The community quickly became self-sustaining with water supplied from a well. Dairy products, poultry and beef were produced from the Cooperative's livestock. The community prospered until the onset of World War II. For example, in 1941 it made a profit of \$206,500 in 2013 inflation adjusted terms. Unfortunately, the loss of manpower due to the war led to the colony's precipitate decline. Just a few years after the war ended, the colony went into private ownership.

Mile 43. 4 - Charles Mix County Road turn back to pavement

Mile 44.3 - Town of Marty. Turn left onto BIA Road 129 (388th Avenue)

The town of Marty with a population of 402 is at the heart of the Yankton Indian Reservation. The town grew up around the former Marty Catholic Mission complex. It was created in 1913 on allotment land and was named after Friar Martin Marty, a missionary to the Yankton tribe. The most prominent building in the community, the St. Paul Catholic Church, was built of limestone and cement in 1942. The church was part of a complex of buildings that were once part of the Marty Mission Indian School. The complex contained a boarding school as well as a convent for Catholic nuns. In 1975 the Indian School was transferred from the Blue Cloud Agency to the Yankton Sioux Tribe.



Historic Fort Randall Chapel is covered today with a protective shelter

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Mile 50.5 - Take a left onto South Dakota Highway 46

Mile 62.3 - Community of Pickstown

Pickstown was constructed in 1946 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a place for construction workers on Fort Randall Dam to live. The town was named for Lewis A. Pick, co-creator of the Pick-Sloan Plan. It was located a half mile east of the Dam and cost \$10 million dollars at the time of its construction (\$119.7 million dollars in 2013 when adjusted for inflation). It was owned and operated by the U.S. Government. 425 housing units were built for workers and their families. In 1948 and 1949 school buildings were completed, at one time the school had 400 students.

One of the most famous residents of Pickstown was future NBC Nightly News Anchor Tom Brokaw

who spent several years of his childhood in the community while his father worked on the dam's construction. At its peak, Pickstown was the 10th largest town in the state of South Dakota with a population of 4,000. After the Dam was completed in the mid-1950's the town began to decline. Most of the housing stock was sold off, and the population declined to approximately two hundred. The houses left behind, were used to accommodate dam employees.

Mile 63.5 - Fort Randall Dam

Fort Randall was one of the key engineering projects of the Pick-Sloan Plan. Much of the current debate over Missouri River water uses stems from the Flood Control Act of 1944. One component of that piece of legislation is the "Pick-Sloan Plan." That the "Big Muddy" flooded annually was a given. Major floods occurred in 1844, 1881, 1903, 1915, 1926, and 1934. They were no novelty to the people living along the Missouri and its tributaries. But the three floods in 1943 were unusually severe. Much of Omaha was under water, including its airport, vital to the war effort. That year's flooding focused unprecedented public and congressional attention on the Missouri River basin.

Congress responded a year later by passing the Flood Control Act. This law became the guiding spirit of the Missouri River basin and has resulted in the most important and lasting alteration of the basin and its ecosystem. The chain of Missouri River reservoirs and dams from Montana to South Dakota is one of the nation's engineering marvels. Pick-Sloan reflected the prevailing certainty in large technological projects to sustain and support regional development in areas not favored by climate and geography. The dams and reservoirs have only partially fulfilled their promise—hence the continuing tension in the Missouri River basin.

Fort Randall Dam is an earth embankment dam impounding the Missouri River in South Dakota, United States and forming Lake Francis Case. It is one of six Missouri River dams, four being located in South Dakota. The dam was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944 and plays a key role in the Pick-Sloan Plan for development of water resources in the Missouri River basin. The Corps of Engineers began construction of Fort Randall Dam in 1946, and it was the first Pick-Sloan dam completed by the Omaha District. President Dwight D. Eisenhower threw the switch that started the first power generating unit in 1954. When completed in 1956, Fort Randall Dam and the Lake Francis Case Project cost approximately \$200 million (\$1.7 billion in 2013 when adjusted for inflation). The eight generating units of the Fort Randall Dam are capable of generating 40 megawatts of electricity each, with an annual production of 1.727 billion kilowatt hours. The combined maximum capacity of 320 megawatts is enough to supply 245,000 households, according to the Corps of Engineers.

After crossing Fort Randall Dam. Take a left on first road after the dam. Follow signs to Historic Fort Randall

Mile 64.9 - Historic Fort Randall

Just below Fort Randall Dam, at the western edge of the Missouri National Recreational River's 39-mile reach, lay the ruins of Fort Randall. Strategically located on the west or right bank of the Missouri River near the South Dakota-Nebraska border, Fort Randall served as an important outpost on the upper Missouri River for operations against the Sioux in 1863-65 and was one of the chain of forts that surrounded the Sioux country from 1865 to 1876. It served longer as a continuously occupied military post than any other fort on the upper river.

Established by General William S. Harney in June 1856, the post provided troops and routed supplies to serve an assortment of government ventures. Harney named it after the late Deputy Paymaster General of the US Army, Colonel Daniel Randall. The fort's primary purpose was to maintain peace

between American Indians and white settlers, as well as among the tribes themselves. Its soldiers guarded against incursions by Dakota warriors following the Minnesota Sioux Outbreak of 1862. Later, troops interacted with the Ponca along with the Santee, Yankton, and Teton Sioux. Most of the soldiers lived a monotonous military life, working the same routine day after day, broken only by occasional trips into Indian Territory. But the boredom led to discontent among the soldiers, resulting in high desertion rates.

Important visitors to the post always caused a wave of excitement. These included: Buffalo Bill Cody who stopped on his way to the East with his "Wild West Show." Jim Bridger, the famous mountain man, appeared as a scout with a visiting survey crew and renowned Civil War General Phillip Sheridan inspected the post in 1879. Perhaps the most famous inhabitant of Fort Randall was not a soldier but a prisoner. Sitting Bull (Tatanka Iyotake) of the Lakota Sioux is probably best known for his contribution towards the defeat of Col. George Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn. He and his band of 158 Hunkpapa Sioux camped south of the fort and were kept under loose surveillance from July 1881 until November 1883 when he was moved to Fort Yates, in present day North Dakota. In 1877, Chief Standing Bear and his brother Big Snake, head of the Ponca warrior society, were briefly imprisoned in retaliation for opposing relocation of the tribe and for evicting federal Indian agents from tribal land. They were released by the fort commander who sent a telegram of protest to President Hayes.

The most conspicuous improvement to the fort made in the 1870s, when it was home to the 1st United States Infantry, was that of the combination chapel, library and lodge. Conceived by Lt. Colonel Pinkney Lugenbeel and designed by the post carpenter, George Bush, the cross-shaped building was erected in 1875 with the sweat from many a soldier and at a cost of about \$20,000. The Army campaign of 1876 substantially ended the military aspect of the regional "Indian question." But the post continued to provide security by assuring federal presence to settlers who flocked into newly opened lands in the region. By 1880, the Great Plains had calmed considerably and the western frontier had passed over the South Dakota horizon. The end came on October 31, 1892, when Fort Randall was turned over to the Quartermaster Department. In a historic quirk of irony, the last company to leave the post on December 7th was composed entirely of American Indians, commanded by two white officers. Upon abandonment in 1892, and with exception of the chapel, the fort's buildings and contents were sold at auction and removed by local settlers.

Visitor's Note: There are multiple interpretive signs along the half-mile walking tour of the fort site. Take your time to stroll the grounds and learn more about the fort's history. Follow signs to Fort Randall Cemetery

Mile 65.8 - Fort Randall Cemetery

The Fort Randall Post Cemetery was platted in 1877. It replaced an older cemetery which had been consumed by a prairie fire that had swept over the site. Two years after the closure of the fort in 1892 the United States Government exhumed the remains of 63 soldiers and four children from the cemetery. Their remains were transported to Fort Leavenworth in Kansas for reburial. Today the cemetery is surrounded by a picket fence and contains whitewashed headboards with the names of soldiers and civilians who died while at the fort. At least 13 children and 15 adult civilians were buried at the Post Cemetery. Many of the civilians who died at the post are still interred at the cemetery. The causes of sickness and death at the fort include everything from pneumonia, typhoid fever, diphtheria, diarrhea and even insanity. Counter intuitively, few were wounded or died in fighting with hostile tribes.

